

Updated and expanded 10th anniversary edition!

KNEAD
to KNOW
...MONEY

Your microbakery handbook

Chris Young and bakers of the Real Bread Campaign

What bakers said about the original Knead to Know



The most practical book for anyone thinking of starting a bakery enterprise.”

Emma Parkin,
Emma’s Bread, Exeter



There are lots of books with bread recipes in them, but only one with a bakehouse recipe.”

Alex Lister,
Rise Artisan Bakehouse, Durham



The book was invaluable to me when I was starting Wild Bread.”

James Thorn,
Wild Bread, Faversham



Knead to Know was massively helpful when I started the Stoneham Bakehouse journey.”

Simon Cobb,
Stoneham Bakehouse, Hove



This book was a gold mine for us, back in the day.”

Max Tobias,
The Dusty Knuckle, London



The book was biblical for my personal journey!”

Jo Bottrill,
Jo’s Loaves, Bedfordshire

Disclaimer

While we’ve made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in this book, it’s not intended to be either exhaustive or definitive. Awareness of, and compliance with, all legislation applicable where you are is your responsibility. Sustain cannot be held responsible for the results of following (or not following) any suggestions in Knead to Know...more, or for any consequences that might arise from any errors or omissions.

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Intro

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Foreword

This is a remarkable book. Not only because knowhow springs from every page and transforms into practical wisdom before our eyes, but because it has been fermented by the desire to do good. There's plenty about the practicalities of running a small baking business, of course. There is also realism about the need to make a fair return, whatever the scale. But what makes this a vital manual for our troubled times is its spirit of companionship and mutual aid – celebrating and supporting the collective endeavour to nourish ourselves and our fellow citizens with Real Bread.

“This is not a baking book!”, we are told on the back cover. Nor is it about ‘start-up’ businesses. This is, rather, a book for and by *upstarts* – people who determine to bake and share good bread and, sometimes to their own surprise, find themselves becoming part of a little, local, benign revolution. For one thing is clear: fighting corporate monocultures won't feed people better or more fairly; replacing them is the only way.

Becoming part of a new ecology of better grain and bread is hard work. The transformation of simple ingredients into something life-giving involves many agents working together. So it is encouraging that the collective experience and advice of the many micro, artisan and community bakers quoted in this greatly expanded edition of *Knead to Know* adds up to a resounding confirmation that it is *worth it*: this work, this bread, changes lives.

Ten years ago, we were just beginning to understand the importance of bacterial diversity in soils, cereals, sourdoughs and stomachs. The role of well-fermented food in supporting good gut-brain signalling confirms the ‘therapeutic’ value, explained in these pages as being as much to do with the baker as the baked-for, of making Real Bread with and for others.

Grasp this volume with your hands – it is a manual, after all – and you will learn as much about the *why* as the *how*.

Andrew Whitley is the co-founder of *Bread Matters*, the *Real Bread Campaign* and *Scotland the Bread*.

Introduction

The Real Bread Campaign's overarching mission is to find and share ways to make bread better for us, better for our communities and better for the planet. We define Real Bread as made without so-called processing aids or other additives, and work towards everyone having the chance to choose it. An element of this is informing, inspiring and promoting the microbakers who are instrumental in putting Real Bread back at the hearts of local communities around the UK and beyond.

Who is this for?

Got the hang of crafting consistently great Real Bread, feel you're now ready to start selling it, but are hesitant about getting the lease on that boarded-up shop on the high street? Maybe your microbakery business is up and running already and you're thinking of expanding and taking on employees. This book's not just for Real Bread bakers, either. Much of it is relevant whatever type of baking you do or type of small food business yours is, so step this way...

What is a microbakery?

That depends on who you're asking. When people in our circles talk about a microbaker, they're usually referring to a sole trader making up to a few dozen loaves in their home kitchen oven each weekend, or as often as the local farmers' market runs. There are variations, such as roping in a family member, friend or three; using a garage, shed or even small commercial space; getting a 'semi-pro' oven; baking hundreds of loaves; and perhaps operating on a full-time basis. For more see page 50.

Flip, dip and skip

I've laid out the business sections roughly in the order that a microbaker might need to know things. The first section is mainly geared to the sole trader running a microbakery from home, but also looks at other types of bakeries and business models run in different locations and by more people. The second bit is about scaling up. There is, however, stuff in all three sections that should be of use, or at

least interest, wherever you are on your bakery business journey, which might well not follow the same order or path. Please do dip in and out, flip back and forth and skip bits altogether as suits you.

Is this everything I need to know?

Nope. Rather than aiming to be a fully comprehensive manual for starting and running your own business, this is an introductory guide. It is a buffet of tasters with pointers to where you can find out more about the topics you find the most appetising. I'll *try* to rein in the puns, metaphors and other wordplay from here on in...

While I've included a few loaf recipes, this isn't a baking book - there are plenty out there already, including our own (plug, plug) *Slow Dough: Real Bread*. Importantly, reading is no substitute for rolling up your sleeves and getting stuck in. You'll learn some of the most important lessons in your own bakehouse. Bakers have told us that they have also found it extremely useful to spend time alongside experienced bakers, either on a course or working (or volunteering) in a bakery.

When should I quit my day job?

How long is a ficelle? There's no 'normal' or 'typical' to this: when, where and how your bakery business develops is up to you. You're in charge of the pace, scale and direction of development. You might race from hobby baker, via home-based microbaker, to owning a bakery on the high street in 12 months, or it could take years until you move (or get kicked) out of your kitchen. The again, you might keep clocking in at the office, with your bakery staying as a weekend side hustle. If you do plan to quit the day job and rely instead on your microbakery income, though, please be sure to do your sums as part of your business planning - see page 43.

Reality check

While we don't want to discourage anyone, we also want to be sure that people are realistic. Turning a baking hobby into a financially sustainable business is hard. It requires a considerable investment of your time, money and self. This is true for the home-based weekend microbaker and even more so if and when you scale things up.



Starting out

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Home is where the start is

For any baker, the cost of buying or renting a space to do the doughy deed can be one of their biggest business overheads. For the budding newbie microbaker, the cost of commercial property is usually prohibitive, so some creative thinking is needed to find a suitable and financially viable space for your start-up. This might well be in your own home.

“ Starting at home gives you a chance to test local demand. If neighbours, local businesses and customers at your local market like what you are doing, you have a real chance to build your reputation, develop demand and make a success of your business locally.”

Jane Mason, Virtuous Bread

Your bakehouse

Call it a bakehouse or bakery, this is where the baking happens.* Where you choose to make your bread depends on factors including the type and amount of baking you'll be doing and your business model.

When planning to start a microbakery from home, things to think about include:

- Clean and dry storage area(s) for ingredients and equipment, free from pests and pets. Ideally, your microbakery ingredients and kit should be separate from those you use domestically, though this might not be entirely possible – particularly when it comes to your oven.
- Refrigeration space, especially if you plan to retard dough (see pages 169 & 224).
- Recycling, composting and other waste disposal facilities. Your local authority might insist that you arrange (and perhaps pay for) them as a business user, rather than just chucking it all in with your domestic waste collection.
- Your electrical supply needs to be suitable for the type and amount of equipment you're using, with an appropriate number of power points in suitable locations, rather than umpteen plugs in adapters. You might find that a single-phase domestic supply is sufficient, but larger equipment, such as deck ovens and large mixers, are likely to draw more power and may require a three-phase supply. Ask an electrician or your equipment supplier to advise.

or reproduction.



For review

SUPER

Equipment

When you think about it, all you really *need* to make bread are the means to measure, mix, prove, shape and then cook the ingredients. This could be as simple as hands, work surface and oven*.

What other bits of kit you might need or choose to acquire depends on factors such as the type of products you'll be making, how many you intend to produce at a time, the space you have to work in and what you want to acquire to make your job easier.

*or hotplate, steamer etc, depending on what sort of bread you make.

“ At the start-up phase, when you need to concentrate on becoming a decent baker, you should keep machinery to a minimum. With fewer machines you are going to handle the dough more and intrinsically learn about fermentation and your chosen craft. Later, you can select certain machines that will enhance the output of your already good bread and pastries.”

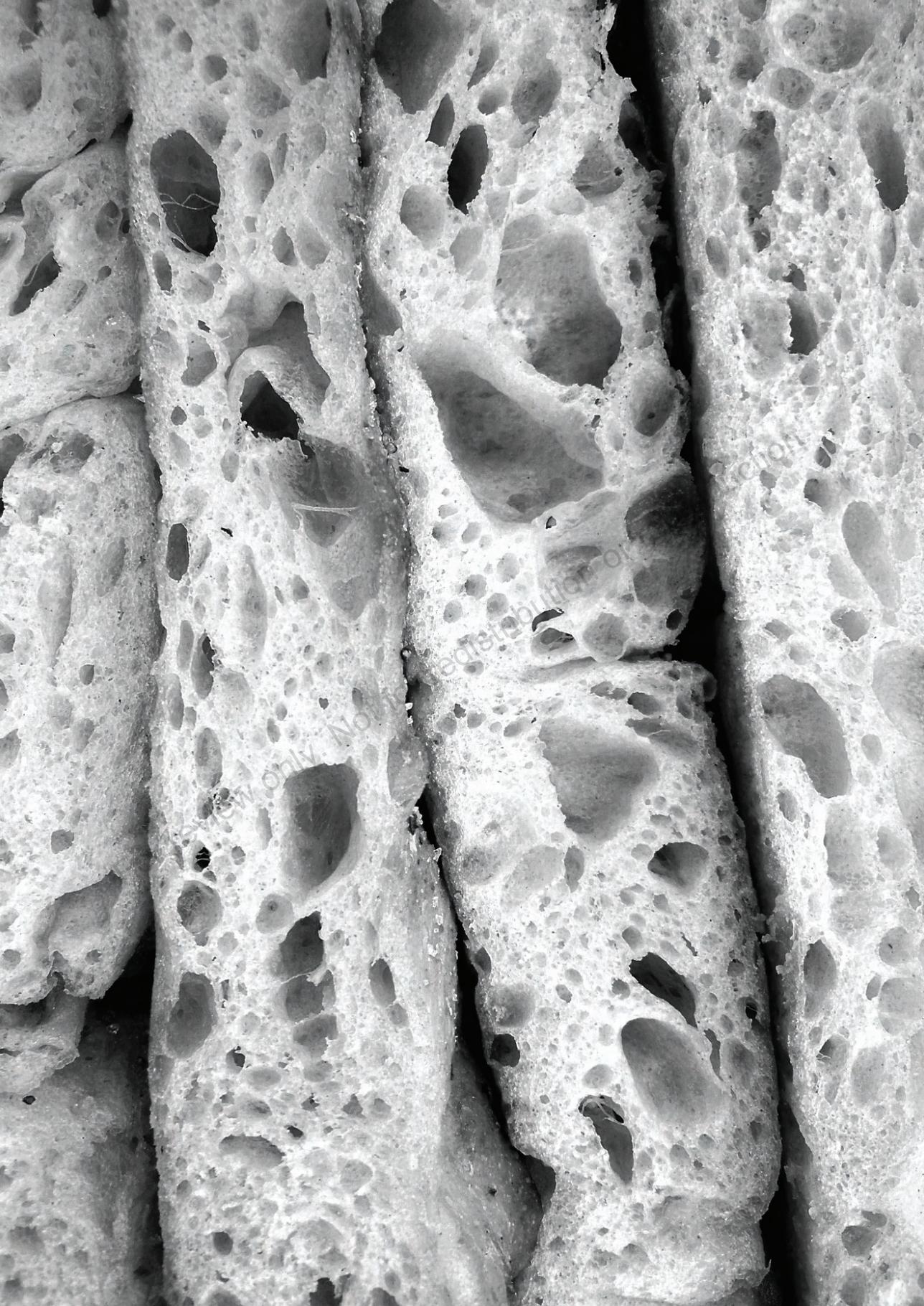
Paul Merry, Panary, Dorset

Basic microbakery bits

While a few of the following items are essential, many are simply useful. Some of this kit might still be of use to a baker who's flown the nest to a bigger bakehouse, but also see the section on larger equipment on page 167.

Baking stone

Opinion on the value of baking on a pizza stone, terracotta tile, granite worktop offcut, or slab of refractory material is divided. Some bakers insist it gives a better oven spring and crust to the underside of a loaf. Others say that, being only a centimetre or two thick, such a stone can't build up enough heat to make any significant difference. They can also take extra time (and therefore energy, money and CO₂) to heat. NB: referring to a loaf produced in a domestic oven as 'stone baked' because it sat on one of these goes against the Campaign's drive for honest marketing.



What bread should I make?

The general consensus among bakers we asked was that the beginner should start with just a few types and get really good at them. You might well continue along these lines or branch out from your core range as demand, and your ability to meet it, increases.

“ Start with a small product range, rather than aiming to cater for every niche order from the off. When you are confident with your tried and tested products and your muscle memory is firmly in place, you can add new products, which customers love.”

Ian Waterland, Knead Good Bread, Leicestershire

“ For any new product, try making small batches at weekends first - that tends to be when customers are looking for something a bit different. When it starts to sell in larger numbers, extend the production into the weekdays.”

Peter Cook, Peter Cooks Bread, Herefordshire

Meeting and creating demand

The decision of what to make is yours but you may have to strike a balance between what you want to produce and what people in your area want to buy. You might want to ‘educate’ or ‘teach’ people about (we prefer to talk about ‘sharing knowledge and pleasure of’) types of bread that they aren’t used to eating. There’s no use in stubbornly baking a mountain of (for example) your favourite 100% wholemeal rye sourdough bread every day if most of it regularly goes unsold and ends up in a food bank or pig trough, though.

If your customers are asking for white sandwich tin loaves, the profitability of your business might depend upon you meeting that demand. In this situation, take pride in making the best white tin loaf you can - which might or might not involve longer fermentation, stoneground flour or other things of particular importance to you.



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Community Supported Baking

Many a small bakery is embedded in its local community and its owner(s) might justifiably consider it to be a (or *the*) community bakery. Typically, most of its customers will be local people, so you could say the business is supported by the community. We believe, however, that a Community Supported Bakery (CSB) goes further by fundamentally blurring and redefining - or even removing - the traditional separation between the owner and the customers of a bakery business.

“ It’s not just about having a bakery on the high street for people to go to buy loaves only as and when they need to.”

Russell Goodwin, Companio, Manchester

What is Community Supported Baking?

There is no legal, or even generally-agreed, definition of a Community Supported Bakery. The concept echoes Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which in turn bears similarities to the Japanese teikei system/philosophy. Paraphrasing The Soil Association’s CSA definition, we say that a CSB is a partnership between bakers and loaf buyers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of running the business are shared. Your own idea of the ‘community’ in which the bakery thrives might extend beyond bakers and buyers to include cereal breeders and growers/farmers, through to millers, waste warriors and other people in your seed-to-sandwich bread web.

We believe that a true CSB doesn’t simply pay lip service to the ethos - for example by running a subscription scheme that only accounts for a small part of the business’s turnover. Everyone involved makes a meaningful investment and receives benefits, of one kind or another, as what the Slow Food movement calls ‘co-producers’. A CSB might take the form of a worker-owned (or other type of) co-operative or have been crowdfunded and pay dividends to its funder(s). It might be run by a sole trader whose pre-paid subscription orders or bread bonds scheme account for the majority, or all, of its income or starting capital.

• BREAD.
• BREAD.
• BREAD.
• BREAD.
• BREAD.



Marketing

You're baking the best Real Bread that you can bake, right? Selling honest loaves at an honest price? You've gone to great lengths to ensure that each loaf looks, smells and – most importantly – tastes fantastic? Great, because Real Bread is what it's all about. Now, where are those customers? This is where marketing comes in.

Back in 2010, The Handmade Bakery co-founder Dan McTiernan told us: “Our main key is to adhere to [marketing guru] Seth Godin’s mantra of being a ‘purple cow’. By this he means be remarkable. We try to keep pushing what we do and how we do it both to keep up our own ethical and political aims of trying to change our community’s connection with food for the better, and because we recognise that only by thinking creatively and building on what we have done before will we be satisfied. By doing these things we have attracted the attention of regional and national press, radio and television.”

What is marketing?

Marketing is more than just advertising. It is “the homework that managers undertake to assess needs, measure their extent and intensity and determine whether a profitable opportunity exists. Marketing continues throughout the product’s life, trying to find new customers by improving product appeal and performance, learning from product sales results and managing repeat performance.” Philip Kotler et al, *Principles of Marketing*, Pearson Education, 2002

Successful marketing can be summed up in five Ps:

- The right Product.
- For the right Person.
- In the right Place.
- At the right Price.
- With the right Promotion.



Bake well

In short, take care of yourself! If you have employees, you have a legal (and moral) duty of care to look after them as well. While much of this is more applicable to bakeries with staff, some is of relevance to sole traders. This chapter was written with the help of baker Morgan Williams.

Body

Being a baker is a physically demanding job, which may well involve heavy lifting and repetitive tasks, all surrounded by a number of hazards. It is easy to mitigate against most of these. Consider what things might be a danger to health and how to prevent or avoid them: eg putting out a wet floor sign when you mop to reduce the risk of slipping, being careful to use proper lifting technique when handling bags of flour or heavy boxes of dough.

Much of this section is pitched at a bakery with employees, but the home-based microbaker should give it a read to be aware of good practice and any legal requirements. Check with your local authority if they offer advice on health and safety at work.

Burns

These are almost an inevitable part of baking. When sticking your arm in a 300°C (or however hot) oven, you need certain bits of PPE (personal protective equipment). Whether using folded tea towels, oven gloves or baker's elbow-length heavy-duty mitts, make sure they're DRY! You should also consider wearing a top made of natural fibres (they don't melt and are better for a sweaty job) with long sleeves. If (when) you burn yourself, current medical advice is to run it under cool water for at least 20 minutes.

Cuts

Holding a razorblade in your fingers to score or slash dough is just asking for trouble. A lame or grignette (see page 28) to hold the blade will reduce the risk of cutting yourself. Between uses store your lame safely, either in a labelled box or on a magnetic holder and remember to dispose of used blades carefully. If you go through a lot, it might be worth getting a sharps box. Don't try to catch that falling

Credits

Knead to Know...more

Chris Young and bakers of the Real Bread Campaign

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Photos on these pages were taken at:

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“There are lots of books with bread recipes in them, but only one with a bakehouse recipe.”

Alex Lister, Rise Artisan Bakehouse, Durham

Ever been told that your Real Bread is so good that people would be happy to buy it?

Fancy becoming your local dough dealer but not sure where to start?

Scaling up your business?

Whether starting a microbakery from your own kitchen, teaming up with neighbours to establish a Community Supported Bakery, or taking the next steps as your high street's baker, this unique business guide is for you.

Inside you'll find information on setting up your bakehouse, ingredients, equipment, money matters, marketing, legislation, staffing a small bakery and much more.

In between these wholesome slices, we've sandwiched tasty titbits from genuine artisan loafmongers who run successful Real Bread bakeries of all types and sizes.

“The most practical book for anyone thinking of starting a bakery enterprise.”

Emma Parkin, Emma's Bread, Exeter

First published in 2011, the original Knead to Know graces the bookshelves of thousands of aspiring flour arrangers around the UK, Ireland and beyond. At twice the length, this updated and expanded 10th anniversary edition of the Real Bread Campaign's unique microbakery manual is here to inform and inspire many more.

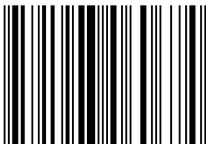
“This is a remarkable book.”

Andrew Whitley, Bread Matters and Scotland the Bread, Anstruther


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